Poa pratensis - (Pascopyrum smithii) Semi-natural Herbaceous Vegetation

COMMON NAME Kentucky Bluegrass - (Western Wheatgrass) Semi-natural Herbaceous Vegetation
SYNONYM Kentucky Bluegrass Semi-natural Grassland
PHYSIOGNOMIC CLASS Herbaceous Vegetation (V)
PHYSIOGNOMIC SUBCLASS Perennial graminoid vegetation (V.A)
PHYSIOGNOMIC GROUP Temperate or subpolar grassland (V.A.5)
PHYSIOGNOMIC SUBGROUP Natural/Semi-natural (V.A.5.N)
FORMATION Medium-tall bunch temperate or subpolar grassland (V.A.5.N.d)
ALLIANCE POA PRATENSIS SEMI-NATURAL HERBACEOUS ALLIANCE
CLASSIFICATION CONFIDENCE LEVEL 3
USFWS WETLAND SYSTEM Terrestrial

RANGE

Lacreek National Wildlife Refuge

Introduced, exotic grasslands occur throughout the northern portion of the Refuge and are associated with disturbances such as roadsides, abandoned farm fields, and areas that were interseeded with exotic grasses to "improve" the range for grazing.

Globally

This type is potentially widespread throughout the Great Plains and into the Midwest, depending on how the type is defined.

ENVIRONMENTAL DESCRIPTION

Lacreek National Wildlife Refuge

Introduced grasslands are on relatively level sites accessible to farming equipment. Typically the soils are silt and/or clay loams, which historically supported western wheatgrass (*Pascopyrum smithii*) alliance grasslands.

Globally

This type can occur in a wide variety of human-disturbed and native habitats.

MOST ABUNDANT SPECIES

Lacreek National Wildlife Refuge

Stratum	Species
Herbaceous	*Poa pratensis*

Globally

Stratum	Species
Graminoid	*Poa pratensis*

CHARACTERISTIC SPECIES

Lacreek National Wildlife Refuge

Poa pratensis, *Pascopyrum smithii*, *Bromus japonicus*, *Psoralidium tenuiflorum*

Globally
Pascopyrum smithii, Poa pratensis

OTHER NOTABLE SPECIES (n/a)

VEGETATION DESCRIPTION
Lacreek National Wildlife Refuge
Stands of introduced grasses typically have moderate herbaceous cover, ranging from 40-90%, and very dense litter over the ground surface. Many abandoned agricultural fields and selected range interseeding sites are strongly dominated by Kentucky bluegrass (*Poa pratensis*). In some cases, a few plants of western wheatgrass (*Pascopyrum smithii*) and fairly large stands of ragweed (*Ambrosia psilostachya*) may also be present. Many species of forbs and occasional shrubs are also found in the type.

Globally
The vegetation is dominated by medium-tall (0.5 - 1 m) graminoids. The dominant grass is *Poa pratensis*, considered to be both a native and naturalized species from Eurasia (Great Plains Flora Association 1986, Gleason and Cronquist 1991). Other native species may occur as well, but they are generally less than 10% cover. Native species may include mixed-grass prairie grasses, such as *Pascopyrum smithii* and *Hesperostipa comata*, as well as others.

CONSERVATION RANK GW. This is primarily a naturalized type from Europe and Asia, widely planted for lawns and pasture, and it has escaped into a variety of habitats (Great Plains Flora Association 1986, Gleason and Cronquist 1991). Although native populations do exist,and may be integral parts of some prairie and other native habitats, most stands that are thoroughly dominated by *Poa pratensis* are a result of human modifications to the habitat.

DATABASE CODE CEGL005265

SIMILAR ASSOCIATIONS

COMMENTS
Lacreek National Wildlife Refuge
The introduced grassland group occupies previously disturbed sites, including roadsides, abandoned agricultural fields, and interseeded rangeland. Stands of Kentucky bluegrass tend to be monotypic. They tend to have dense litter layers that impede other species establishment and also serves to store moisture following precipitation events.

Globally
(n/a)

REFERENCES
Gleason, H.A., and A. Cronquist. 1991. Manual of vascular plants of northeastern United States and adjacent Canada. New York Botanical Garden, Bronx, NY. 910 pp.
Great Plains Flora Association. 1986. Flora of the Great Plains. University of Kansas Press, Lawrence. 1392 pp.